

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2282

As Passed House:
February 11, 2014

Title: An act relating to the early learning advisory council.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to the early learning advisory council.

Sponsors: House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Farrell, Walsh, Kagi, Roberts and Pollet).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 1/20/14, 1/23/14 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/11/14, 90-8.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Adds one representative from each of the 10 Early Learning Regional Coalitions to the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC).
- Removes one leader in early childhood education appointed by the Governor from the ELAC.
- Adds one representative of school-age child care providers to the ELAC.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Fagan, Farrell, Goodman, MacEwen, Roberts, Sawyer, Senn and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Young.

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Early Learning Advisory Council.

The Legislature created the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) in 2007 to advise the Department of Early Learning (DEL) on statewide early learning needs and progress. The ELAC delivered a statewide early learning plan in 2010. After completion of that report, the role of the ELAC was revised to advise the DEL on issues that would build a comprehensive system of quality early learning programs and services for Washington's children and families by assessing needs and the availability of services, aligning resources, developing plans for data collection and professional development of early childhood educators, and establishing key performance measures.

The ELAC members serve two-year, staggered terms. The ELAC is co-chaired by one representative of a state agency and one nongovernmental member elected for two-year terms. The DEL provides staff support to the ELAC and members are reimbursed for travel expenses.

Current membership consists of 23 members including one representative from the DEL, one representative from the Office of Financial Management, one representative from the Department of Social and Health Services, one representative from the Department of Health, one representative from the Student Achievement Council, one representative from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, one representative from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), seven leaders in early childhood education appointed by the Governor, two members of the House of Representatives from each caucus, two members of the Senate from each caucus, two parents, one representative of the public-private partnership, one representative designated by sovereign tribal governments, and one representative from the Washington Federation of Independent Schools.

Early Learning Regional Coalitions.

Current law requires the DEL Director to actively participate in a nongovernmental private-public partnership focused on supporting government investments in early learning and ensuring that every child in the state is prepared to succeed in school and life. This public-private partnership includes 10 Early Learning Regional Coalitions (ELRCs) including Central, King County, Northeast, Northwest, North Central, Olympic-Kitsap Peninsulas, Pierce County, Southeast, Southwest, and West Central.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The bill increases the total membership on the ELAC by 11, from 23 to 34. Representatives from each of the 10 ELRCs are added to the ELAC. The number of leaders in early childhood education appointed to the ELAC by the Governor is reduced by one, from seven to six. A representative of a statewide alliance of early learning advocates is added to the ELAC. A representative of school-age child care providers appointed by the Governor is also added to the ELAC.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The ELAC is a partner in implementing our statewide early learning system and in building a comprehensive system. A component of this is improving state and local coordination. The DEL, the OSPI, and Thrive by Five completed a state and local coordination project to provide recommendations on how to better assist in that integration. There were 11 recommendations, one of which is the subject of this bill, increasing the membership of the ELAC to include regional voices. First 5 Fundamentals of Pierce County is one of the 10 regional coalitions that would be affected by this legislation. It has over 63,000 children in Pierce County that are under the age of 6. It is their job to make sure that all of those children succeed when they get to kindergarten. First 5 Fundamentals of Pierce County is involved with early learning policy decisions through engagement with the ELAC. It is critical that local representation happens at a state level to affect the needs of children and to implement cost-effective services. There are over 40 members of First 5 Fundamentals in Pierce County. It is important that the voice of coalitions be heard at the ELAC to represent local interests. They already participate, but do not have a vote. The people that really understand what is happening at the local level should have some say in the policy direction of the state. Four years have passed in the implementation of Washington's 10-year early learning plan. The success of this plan will depend on stronger connections between regional and statewide governance bodies. To achieve this connection, this bill adds representation from the regional coalitions to the ELAC. It does that in a way that hardwires expertise into the ELAC for the long term. Washington is continuing to pursue exciting and ambitious work in early learning. A one-size-fits-all approach doesn't always work especially in education systems and communities across the state that have a variety of needs. Understanding the different demographics and needs of our state is critical. The regional coalitions provide the appropriate expertise and goal-setting to address the different issues across the state. The Olympic and Kitsap Peninsula's early learning coalition was founded in 2007 and includes 43 members. Adding the regional coalitions to the ELAC will improve citizen access to the process of implementing and developing the state's early learning plan. This bill will also improve accountability of the ELAC to stakeholders. Without the addition of regional representatives to the ELAC, these regional coalitions will not have a vote on issues of importance to children. The full participation of the 10 early learning coalitions on the ELAC will provide an effective manner for gathering and disseminating information. Children and families will benefit when an early learning system is developed and maintained that is proactive, reflective, and responsive to a variety of needs from community-based settings. Adding these regional coalition representatives to the ELAC will not require any additional funding. At the heart of this bill is ensuring that local community level voices are able to fully participate in state-level policy. The state-to-local coordination project resulted in a recommendation to add the regional coalitions to the ELAC. There are 10 regional coalitions across the state, which currently participate, but cannot vote on the ELAC. The DEL is committed to making the voice of regional coalitions matter, but this bill makes certain that the regional coalitions are included as decision-makers in statewide policy. The regional coalitions bring together a broad array of regional leaders, including community-based providers, tribes, educational service districts, Child Care Aware, school districts, and health districts. The regional coalitions are key coordination and

implementation partners for statewide early learning initiatives such as WaKids, full-day kindergarten, and Early Achievers. These regional coalitions also help address the achievement gap by collecting data and building relationships with service providers that can reach underrepresented communities. The coalitions are behind this bill. Please help statewide early learning planning by supporting this bill.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Susan Barbeau, First 5 Fundamentals; Helen Myrick, United Way of Pierce County; Jon Gould, Children's Alliance; Rhodes Lockwood, Olympia and Kitsap Peninsula Early Learning Coalition; and Kristin Wiggins, Thrive by Five Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.